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Meet Gabe Grajales

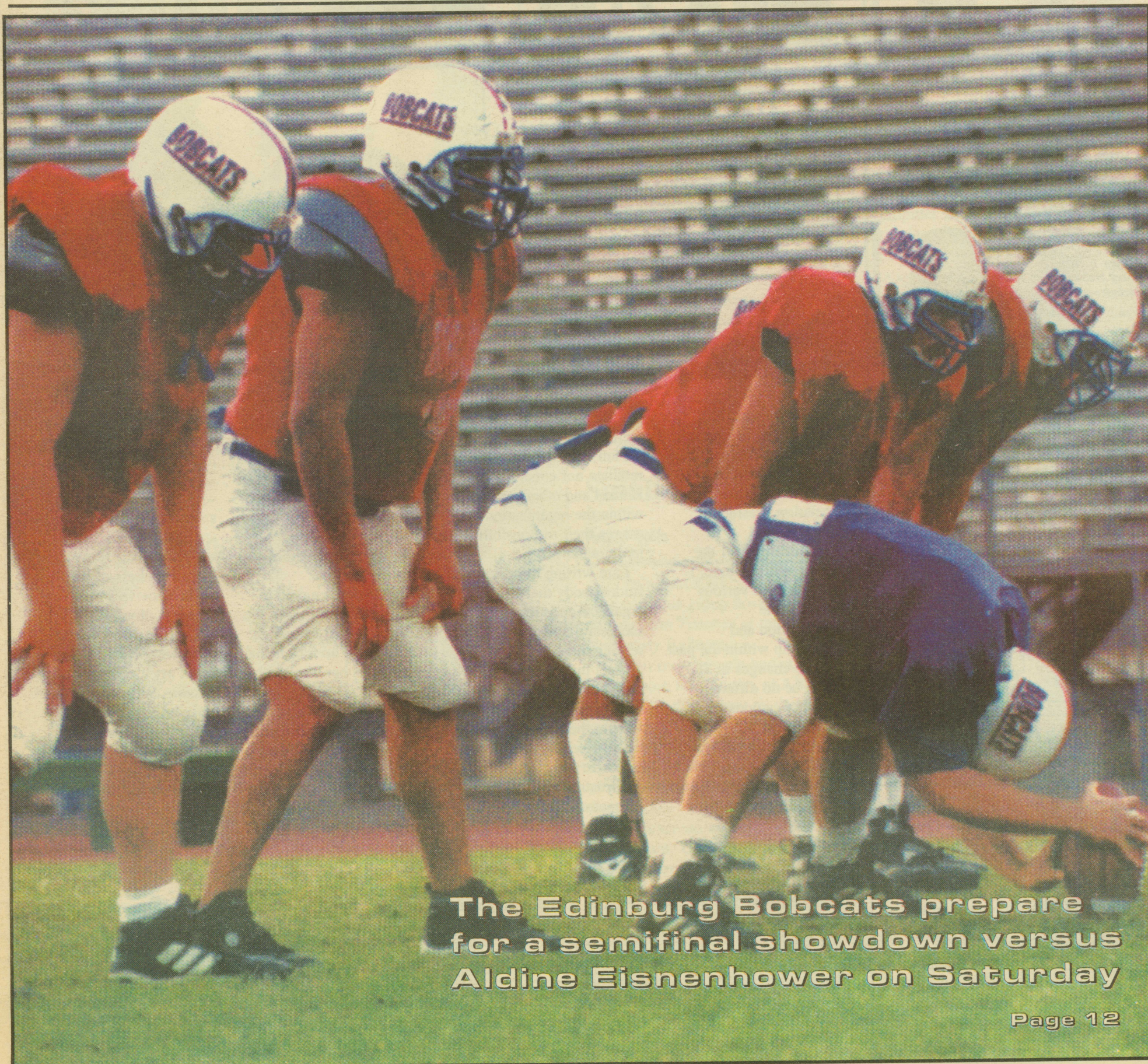
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THURSDAY

December 2, 1999

The Student Newspaper of The University of Texas-Pan American



The Edinburg Bobcats prepare for a semifinal showdown versus Aldine Eisenhower on Saturday

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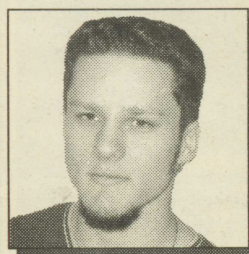
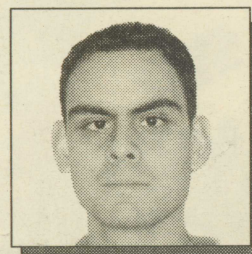
December 2, 1999

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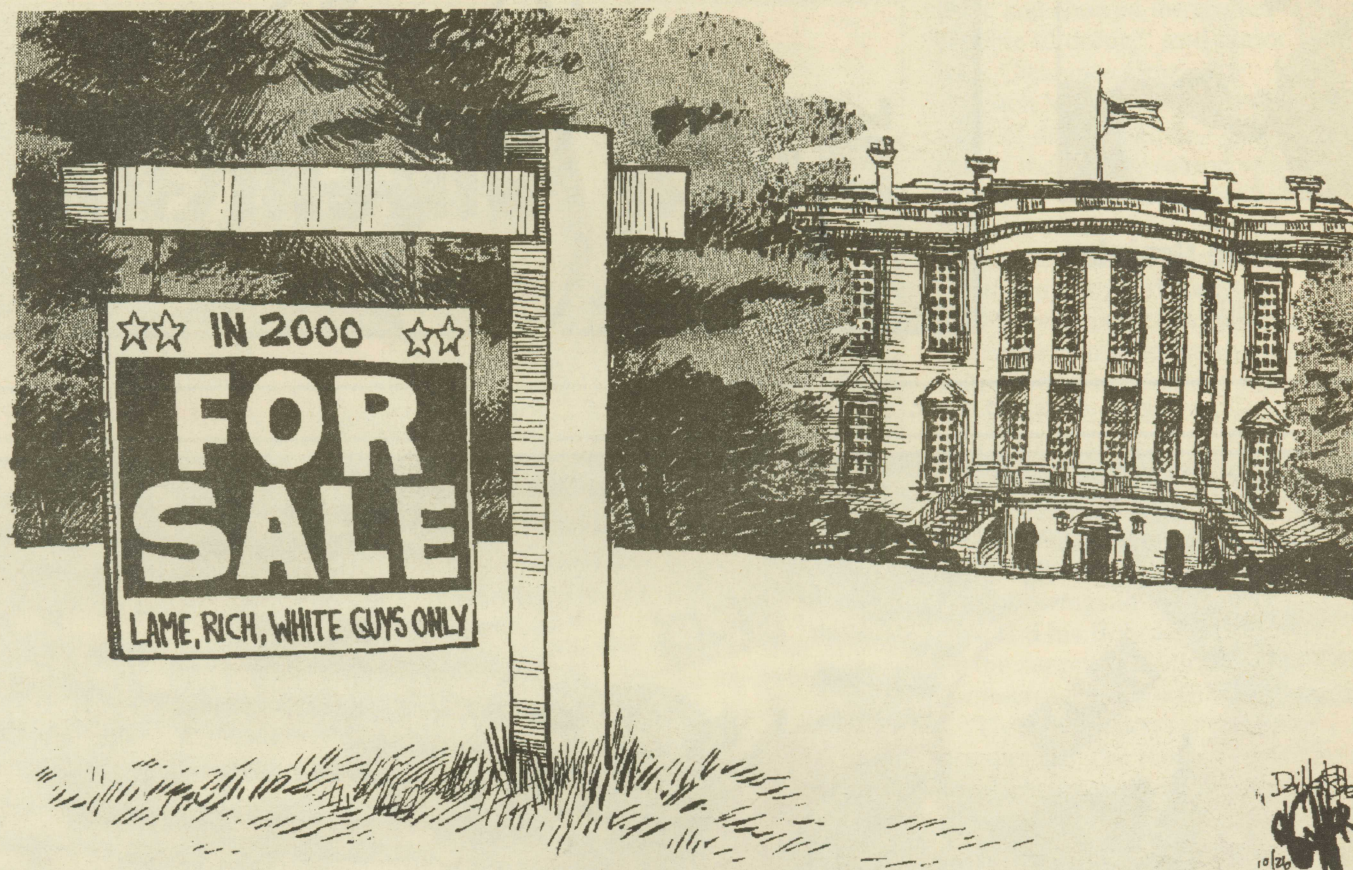
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COMMENTARY



Your²Cents

Student sees resignation as positive for UTPA

To the editor:

This letter is in response to Tuesday's article written on the resignation of the Student Government Association President Heather Henkel.

I am a member of the SGA. In my time here, I have witnessed various changes in the administration and membership within the past year. The changes in SGA seem to be no different from other campus organizations.

I was not surprised to hear of her resigning, but I was surprised of the lack of class she showed in her resignation.

Henkel wrote a strongly worded letter to the organization I wish the student body had the opportunity to read.

The letter contained accusations and insults addressed to certain members which she did not specify. She attempted to brand the organization with

labels and remarks I feel were not called for.

I am writing not to retaliate nor condemn Henkel and other members within the organization that escape their responsibilities in dramatic ways.

I am writing to inform the student body that the organization is more successful and dedicated to serving them.

I feel that Henkel's resignation is a plus for the student body.

From the first day Henkel took office, the organization has experienced hardship and frustration.

Senators, who do not receive stipends to represent students filled the duties that our president should have filled.

Henkel attended only one out of three meetings with our advisors.

She received notices from Vice President for Enrollment Earl Frankenberger requesting her to fill Campus Life

Committee vacancies, a duty the president must fulfill.

She failed to give the organization a presentation of goals stated in the constitution at the beginning of the school year.

She never attempted to fill any of the promises she gave during her campaign.

She stayed no longer than ten minutes per week in her office, and if she did pay the office a visit, she came by at unreasonable hours.

There was virtually no way of communicating with her.

There is no way she could know enough of the organization to pass judgment.

Her resignation allowed a person of outstanding merit to fill the position of a leader.

Furthermore, I feel Henkel didn't need to apologize to the students for not finishing her term.

She needs to apologize

for accepting the \$750 stipend award that goes to the SGA president.

For those who are wondering, the president and vice president positions are paid for with our student service fees. The other members of the SGA do not receive any compensation for their work.

If I were Henkel, I would thank my lucky stars that this was not a professional place of employment.

If it were, she would never been in her president's chair long enough to see the light of day.

Monica De Luna
Senior
Political Science

Cover: The Edinburg Bobcat special teams unit run through drills Tuesday in preparation for their state semifinal playoff game versus Aldine Eisenhower on Saturday. Photo by: Nelson Gonzalez

Student Profile

— Jennifer Davis



Gabe Grajales

In addition to taking on two majors, political science and philosophy, Gabriel (Gabe) Grajales, Jr. has devoted himself to the creation of a college culture at UTPA. Since last spring he has helped to organize a poetry and prose, "open mike" night at a local coffee shop that many UTPA students inhabit regularly. On campus, he serves as propagandist to NORML, the National Organization for the reform of Marijuana Laws. The organization is in its developing phase. "It's important that young people be exposed to all kinds of philosophies and ideas while in college," said Grajales. "This is the time and place for it." Grajales also writes poetry and prose, a practice he hopes to turn into a profession.

HOMETOWN: McAllen

CLASSIFICATION: Junior

MAJOR: Political Science, Philosophy

CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT: NORMAL (developing)

BEST THING ABOUT UTPA: Room for improvement

MAIN GRIPE: Lack of college culture

ROLE MODEL: Jack Kerouac

FAVORITE GETAWAY SPOT: The outdoors

HANDLE STRESS: Writing

PERSONAL MOTTO: Tell me a truth that hurts rather than a lie that feels good

DREAM JOB: Author

BEST FEATURE: An open mind

BEST ADVICE RECEIVED: That which does not kill you only makes you stronger

ADVICE TO COLLEAGUES: Never sacrifice your ideals

Campus Briefs

Student earns award at sixth annual WTAMU Student Research Conference

Staff Report

Weslaco native Tarkan Karadayi, a graduate in computer science at UTPA, took top honors November 5 at the 6th Annual Student Research Conference at West Texas A&M University in Canyon.

Karadayi won second place in the computer science category for "VAS (Visual Analysis System): an Information Visualization Engine to Interpret WWW Structure." His faculty advisor was Dr. Richard H. Fowler.

One hundred and ten undergraduate and graduate students representing 21

colleges and universities from seven states competed for three places in each of the following 10 categories: agriculture; business and management; communication; computer science; education; fine arts; literature and languages; natural sciences; physical sciences; and social and behavioral sciences.

Participants were selected to make 15 to 20 minute presentations of each of the students' original work.

First-place winners in each category received \$200; second-place winners got \$100; and those placing third received \$50.

Small turnout for AIDS panel discussion

Yvette Solis
The Pan American

UTPA's BACCHUS & GAMMA peer educator group hosted an AIDS presentation Tuesday at the University Ballroom.

"I wish more people had come to know about the dangers of AIDS, many think they know all there is to know about this disease but they really don't," said Rosalva Butanda, historian of BACCHUS & GAMMA, of the few students who attended the discussion.

The presentation included an MTV-World Bank-UNAIDS Video and a panel discussion in response to

"I wish more people had come to know about the dangers of AIDS, many think they know all there is to know about this disease but they really don't."

— Rosalva Butanda,
BACCHUS & GAMMA historian

questions from the audience by Raul Rodriguez of Valley AIDS Council and Andy Villa of Valley AIDS Council.

The AIDS Panel discussion is a yearly event held in due of World AIDS Day Observance.

THE PAN AMERICAN is now on the internet.

Visit our web site at

www.panam.edu/dept/panamerican

DECEMBER

2-16 ACTIVITY: ACTUE is hosting a food drive for Mexican orphan girls. ACTUE is collecting canned goods and other non-perishable items including toiletries. Donations can be dropped off in the 1st floor of the University Center and COAS Building.

2 MEETING: The American Marketing Association is meeting from noon - 1 p.m. in BUSA 111.

2 ACTIVITY: The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities presents a discussion on paid federal corporate internship opportunities for students from noon - 1 p.m. in BUSA 110. The discussion will provide students with access to valuable job experience and exposure to career options.

2 ACTIVITY: The University Retention Advisement Program is sponsoring a Stress Management Session to be conducted by Student Health Services. The sessions will be held from noon - 1 p.m. in HSHW 1.406.

2 ACTIVITY: The Office of the Dean of Students is sponsoring a consumer credit counseling services from noon - 1 p.m. in UC 306 & 306-A.

2 ACTIVITY: The English Department, in conjunction with the Writers & Readers Organization, present a faculty poetry reading by Dr. Nikola

Petkovic and Dr. Andrew Kaufman from noon - 1 p.m. in COAS 255.

2 ACTIVITY: The University Gallery is hosting a reception for the Masks from Mexico exhibit from 7 - 9 p.m. in the University Gallery.

3 ACTIVITY: The UTPA faculty and staff are invited to an open house for the CAMP Center located at the Lamar West Building near the corner of Schunior and Sugar Road from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

3 ACTIVITY: The Edinburg Economic Development Corporation and the Edinburg City Council is hosting the Night of Lights "Paseo de Musica" to celebrate UTPA's 10 years with the UT-System at 6:30 p.m. in the Fine Arts Courtyard.

3 CONCERT: The Music Department is presenting a Men's and Women's Chorus Concert at 8 p.m. in the Recital Hall at the Fine Arts Complex.

4-5 CONCERT: The Music Department is presenting the "Alegria 1999-2000" Concert at 2 p.m. in the Fine Arts Auditorium.

4 WORKSHOP: The Accelerated Alternative Program is hosting a free workshop and orientation for anyone considering a career in teaching. The workshop is scheduled from 9 - 10 a.m. in EDC 117.

7 MEETING: The South Texas Independent Film Society (STIFS) is meeting from noon - 1 p.m. in the

TV Studio green room.

7 WOMEN'S BASKETBALL: Lady Broncs vs. UT-San Antonio at 7 p.m. in the Fieldhouse.

7 CONCERT: The Music Department is presenting a Valley Symphony & Chorale Concert at 8 p.m. in the Virgen de San Juan Shrine.

10 ACTIVITY: The University Program Board (UPB) presents the Millennium Music Festival from 8 p.m. - midnight in the Fieldhouse. Students are encouraged to dress up as their favorite historical era. There will be a costume contest, and contest for best booth.

FOR INFORMATION

Art Department	381-2655
Athletic Department	381-2221
Folkloric Dance	381-2230
Intramural office	381-3673
Music Department	381-3471
UTPA Theatre	381-3581

If your club or organization has an upcoming campus activity, *The Pan American* would like to post it in this calendar. Send it to COAS 170 by noon Thursday at least one week in advance.

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Student government restructures in wake of Henkel's resignation

Staff Report

Heather Henkel turned in her resignation Friday as president of the Student Government Association.

According to Henkel, communication between her and the SGA initially ran into problems when she moved her office without letting the Student Senate know.

Members of the SGA claim that Henkel was not fulfilling her duties as president by not showing up to 3 out of the 9 meetings. Henkel stated she was not required to attend.

For now, former vice-president Chalam Mulukutla will fill the position of president for the remainder of the term.

Mulukutla says his added workload has not been bad since Henkel resigned. He has only spent a few more hours working than normal. He says he has had to find out what she had been working on and this is the phase he is in right now.

Mulukutla will nominate a potential vice president by the next senate meeting. If two thirds of the

senators approve of his nomination, that person will immediately assume the role. Mulukutla says when the new vice president is appointed SGA business will return to normal.

A Senate Committee was created to investigate whether Henkel was fit to be president.

"I did not quit because of the investigation, I didn't even know what they were going to investigate because I fulfilled all the required obligations of my position. I resigned because there were people who didn't like me and were making my life uncomfortable," said Henkel.

Henkel said that she wanted to make changes in the SGA constitution such as including members of organizations and clubs into the SGA so that more of the student body would be represented.

Henkel also stated that many of the motions that she wanted to pass were rejected.

Instead, Henkel stated, the SGA opted to pass more important motions such as capitalizing the 't' in the Student Government Association.

SGA sponsors Book Swap to give students opportunity to get better deals on books

Miguel Liscano Jr.
The Pan American

The UTPA Student Government Association (SGA) will sponsor a book swap December 8 through January on the first floor of the library.

The event is an effort to give students a better deal when it comes to buying and selling their textbooks. Students will be given the opportunity to purchase used books at a lower price than offered by the University Bookstore or South Texas Book Supply and sell books at higher prices than those offered by the same stores.

"With the bookstores, a lot of the people feel the prices are very high. We just want to provide another avenue for students to basically be able to sell books and buy books. You can even trade books if you want to," said Chalam Mulukutla, president of SGA.

Students who are interested in selling or buying books through the book swap will be given a card where information about the book

should be written. SGA will provide an enlarged sample card showing what specifically should be included. An e-mail address or phone number should also be included because students will be handling all transactions themselves.

After the card is filled out, it should be placed on one of the three cork boards in the first floor of the library. Students will contact each other through the e-mail address or phone number, and once the transaction is made the card should be removed from the board.

"It's going to benefit both the student and the seller because they buy it for a lower price and sell it at a higher price than a bookstore would give them," said Mulukutla.

Next to the cork boards there will be a list of prices indicating how much new and used books were bought and sold for last semester. Mulukutla says this will prevent some students from being ripped off. SGA will also provide a list of all professors and the books they will be using next semester.

Student wins Karate Championship



-Special to The Pan American

UTPA State Champion Javier Rivas is pictured with Master Bob Davis (left) after winning the Tae Kwon Do State Championships on November 13, 1999 in Corpus Christi. Rivas receives his training through a Health & Kinesiology Karate course at UTPA.

Phi Kappa Phi to award \$380,000 in fellowships for graduate study

Special to The Pan American

The UTPA Chapter of Phi Kappa Phi is inviting senior Phi Kappa Phi students and graduates who have begun graduate work to submit applications for a national fellowship competition.

Fifty competitive fellowships worth up to \$7,000 each and thirty \$1,000 Awards of Excellence will be awarded for the 2000-2001 academic year.

In addition, every chapter nominee receives an Active-For-Life membership to the society.

The criteria considered for competition are: 1) undergraduate academic performance; 2) leadership and service on the campus; 3) evidence of graduate potential; 4) personal statement of education perspective, purpose and objectives; and 5) letters of recommendation from three individuals who can attest to the applicant's performance and

character.

Interested applicants can request an application packet by contacting Lois Day, Phi Kappa Phi representative, at 381-3447.

They can also call Phi Kappa Phi National Headquarters at 1-800-804-9880 or they can e-mail them at awards@phikappaphi.org. to download the application packet and supporting materials from the Phi Kappa Phi Web site. The deadline for the application is February 20.

The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi is the oldest and largest national honor society dedicated to the recognition and promotion of academic excellence in all fields of higher education.

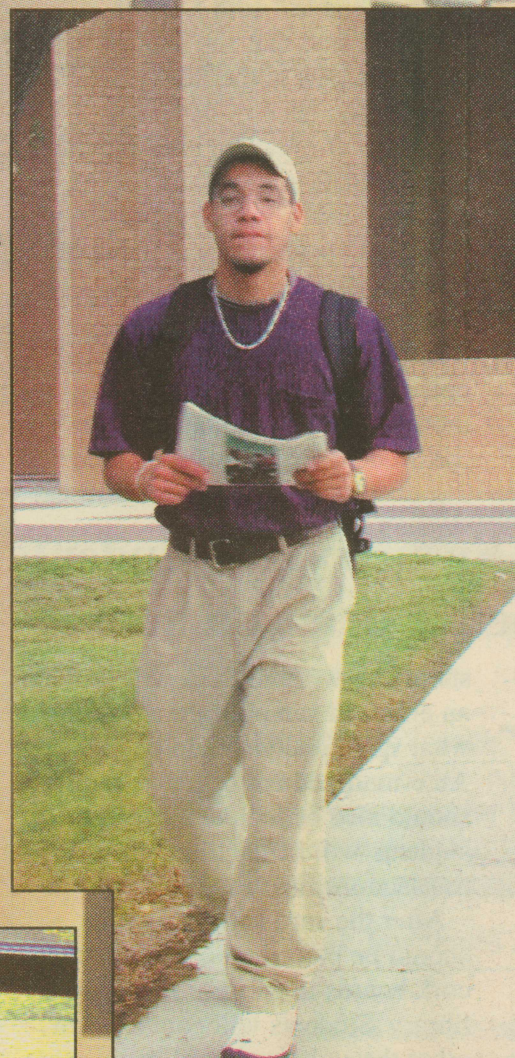
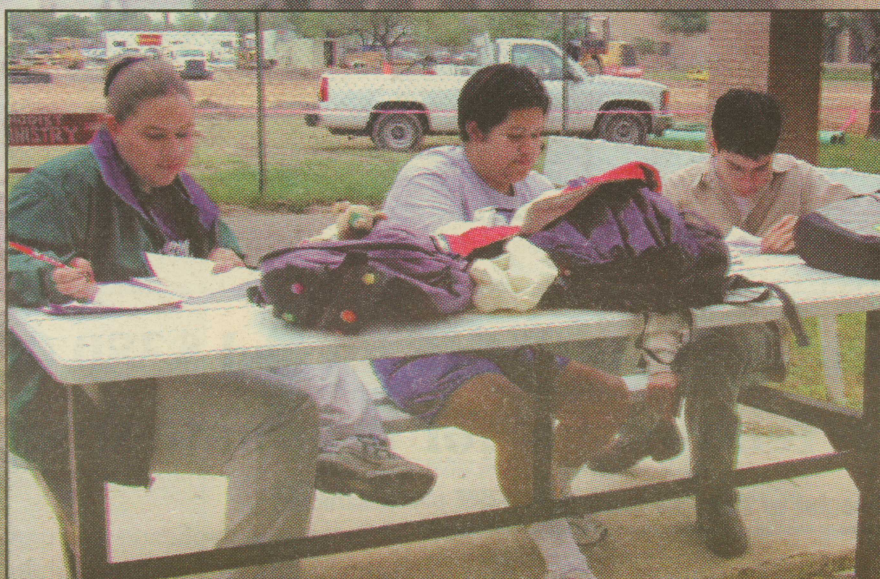
The society's membership numbers more than one million, with 280 chapters located on college and university campuses across the United States, Puerto Rico and the Philippines.

Campus Faces

Below: John Gonzales, president American Advertising Federation sets the agenda for the meeting



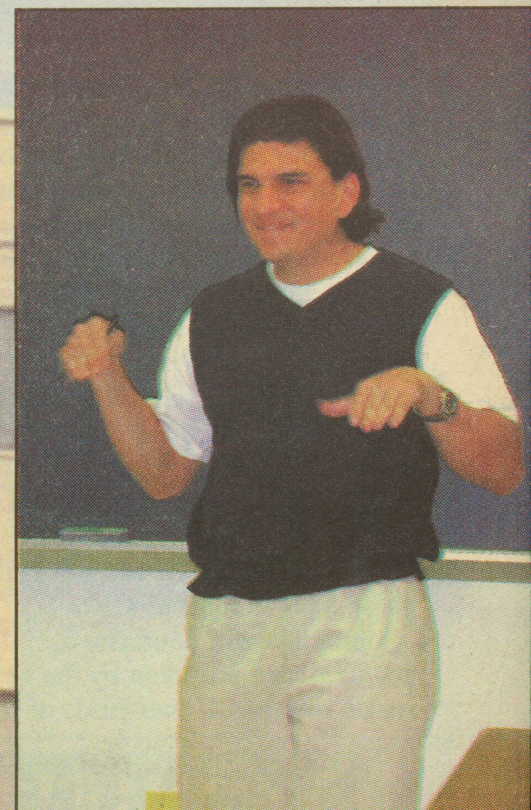
Left: Gabriel Cerda studies on the North Quad.



Above left: Darla Jackson, Denise Gudino and Joey Sanchez study in front of the construction site of the new Math/Computer building.

Above: Joseph Beltran makes his way across campus.

Left: Luis De La Torre takes in the view from the second floor of the library as he studies.

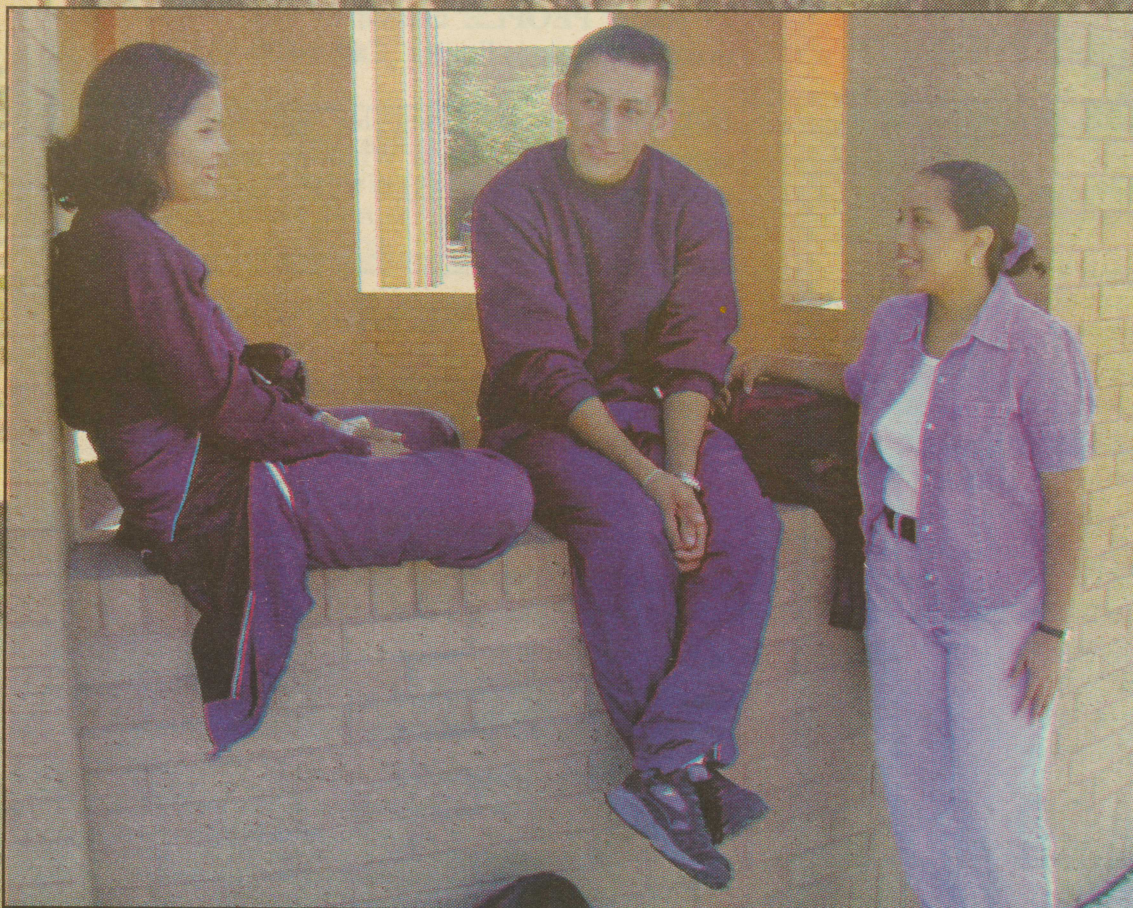


Lizzeth Cortez crosses Sugar Road to make her way to classes.

Photos by Nelson J. Gonzalez



Left: Daniel Gutierrez finds his way to the computer building.



Cristina Cantu, Humberto Maldonado and Adriana Garza relax by the library.



Above: Patti Medrano picks up a copy of The Pan American on the way to class.

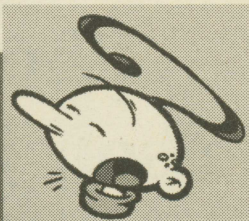
Magic Inkwell

comic strip theatres

by Cayetano

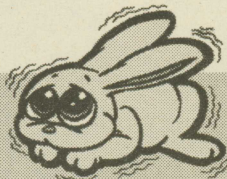


Wandering and pensive
Inspiration missing
The mind so expansive
Yet I can find nothing...



...TO SAY
Though I open my mouth
No words can I speak
My tongue has fled South

A frightened small creature
Is all I've become
Caught in the headlights
Of impossible love



Guitars have gone silent
No minstrels will play
A note for the lovelorn
Lost in dismay



But, oh, if only
Some strength could I find
Then on wings of eagles
Set loose, soul would fly



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The 'Toys' are back in town

Nelson J. Gonzalez

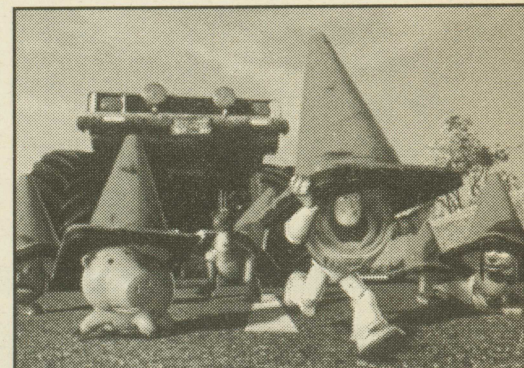
The Pan American

Disney scored big this past week with *Toy Story 2* which earned an unprecedented \$80 million dollars in its five-day opening week. Lucky for us we were able to enjoy it on the silver screen rather than video as it was first planned.

This time around, it is up to Buzz (Tim Allen) to rescue Woody (Tom Hanks) from crazed toy collector Al of Al's Toy Barn (Wayne Knight from *Seinfeld*) who steals him from Andy in order to complete his collection of Woody's Roundup Gang which was a show in the 50s about Woody and his many adventures.

The sequel brings back all our favorite characters such as the three-eyed aliens, Etch-a-sketch, and Rex, we also get to meet Jesse (Joan Cusack), The Old Prospector (Kelsey Grammar) and Bullseye, Woody's lovable horse.

Mattel finally made the right choice in allowing Pixar Animation to have Barbie come out as Tour Guide Barbie. Pixar wanted her in the first movie to portray a heroine, but Mattel thought they would get negative exposure out of the \$191 million blockbuster.



-Special to The Pan American

Buzz and the gang try to save Woody.

There are lots of surprise appearance and inside jokes that many kids and adults alike will get. Geri, from the Oscar-winning short *Geri's Game* which came out in *A Bug's Life*, makes an appearance as an antique toy restorer who is called in to fix Woody. In a hilariously funny homage to *Star Wars*, we get to know who Buzz's estranged father is.

The quality of the animation is unbelievable. From flashback scenes of Jesse's past to the gang crossing a busy street, the extreme detail and action sequences will actually transport you into their world, and it is just plain fun.



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Student Union rising



—Nelson J. Gonzalez/The Pan American

Construction workers labor to erect the \$7 million Student Union Building. The facility, located between the University Ballroom and the Chapel of the Lord's Prayer, will house a 500-seat theater, a food court, game room, a convenience store and offices. The building is scheduled to be completed in June.

UTPA's Adopt-an-Angel Program offers low-income children a brighter Christmas

Special to The Pan American

UTPA students and faculty are again playing the role of Santa Claus, offering low-income children a brighter Christmas through the UTPA Adopt-an-Angel program.

"The UTPA Student Government Association started the Adopt-an-Angel program five years ago in an effort to help low-income students purchase gifts for their children," said Frank Zaleta, UTPA Student Government Association member. "The need for charity here in the Rio Grande Valley is high, especially around the Christmas holiday."

According to Zaleta, the adoption process is simple.

"We ask UTPA students who need help to register their children with the program so that campus student organizations, faculty, staff and community members can adopt a child by buying the gift requested," Zaleta said. "Once all the applications are in, a list is compiled, and from the list, donors can select

“

The need for charity here in the Rio Grande Valley is high, especially around the Christmas holiday.

— Frank Zaleta,
student government member

the angel they want to adopt.”

Zaleta said the gifts usually do not exceed \$20.

As part of the Adopt-an-Angel program, participating children, their parents and donors are invited to attend a banquet on December 18 from noon to 3 p.m. in the Xochitl room at the University Ballroom, where the children receive their gifts and a meal.

Zaleta said the Adopt-an-Angel program has assisted more than 275 children and their families in five years.

For more information on the Adopt-an-Angel program, contact Zaleta at 381-2260 or 381-2659.

Check out our website



<http://www.panam.edu/dept/panamerican>

Read UTPA student newspaper on line

Sports Calendar

December 4

Basketball



Women's @ Lamar University, Beaumont 7:15 p.m.

Notes: The Lady Broncs are currently at 1-3 for the season.

December 6

Basketball



Men's @ UT-El Paso, El Paso 8:05 p.m.

Notes: Their first two games were close ones, with a one point loss and a three point victory.

December 7

Basketball



Women's vs. UT-San Antonio, Fieldhouse 7 p.m.

Notes: Alexandra Gravel leads the Lady Broncs with a .409 3-point field goal percentage and 17.3 scoring average.

December 8

Basketball



Men's @ Illinois, Champaign, Illinois 7 p.m.

Notes: The Broncs are headed on a long road stretch, where they were 0-16 last year.

December 9

Basketball



Women's vs. Oral Roberts University, Fieldhouse 7 p.m.

Notes: Naima Williams has pitched in with 12.0 ppg and 7.7 rpg coming off the bench.

Traditional practice meet set for Friday

Mireya Villarreal

The Pan American

The UTPA track and field team will shake off some rust and get a head start on their upcoming season with a practice meet this Friday here at the UTPA track.

The meet is usually held every year and has become a sort of tradition, according to track and field coach Dana Colligan-Gutierrez.

UTPA will be running against a squad coming in from Texas A&M-Kingsville. It will be an open meet and there is a possibility of seeing some alumni runners and competitors who just want some practice.

"This really isn't considered an official competition. It is actually kind of like a scrimmage. It will all be based on an individual accomplishments, there will be no team scoring whatsoever," said Colligan-Gutierrez.

Runners will not be competing in their usual events. Colligan-Gutierrez said that this gives the athletes a different perspective on the whole idea of running.

"This is good for all of my athletes that didn't compete in cross-country this year and have yet to get any experience or a lot practice. It really gives them a chance to test themselves and their abilities in a sort of simulated competition situation instead of just having them run against themselves all of the time," said Colligan-Gutierrez.

Emanuel Butler is a Junior College transfer that Colligan-Gutierrez claims will be one of the runners to look out for this season. He will be running the 600 meter race this weekend.

Last season's Freshman of the Year Sheree Galvin has been doing well and will compete in the 300 meter race.

Gonzalo Gonzalez and Dawn Hill are some of the athletes that will be participating in the field events.

Overall, Colligan-Gutierrez is just looking for her team to get some extra practice in and experience.

The men's and women's track and field team will be having their first indoor track meet January 15 at the University of Houston.

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Eladio's Picks

Week Thirteen

Eladio's Picks Record

■ Last Week: 11-4
■ Overall Record: 84-47
■ Percentage: .730
■ Overall Percentage: .640



Eladio Jaimez
The Pan American

Pittsburgh at Jacksonville

The Jaguars own the best record in the league, but their only loss came to division rival Tennessee. With the loss to the Bengals, the Steelers will be looking at a new coaching staff next year.

Jaguars by 14

Indianapolis at Miami

Dan Marino's return last week wasn't pretty. The Dolphins' defense will have a hard time handling the Colts' triple assault. The Colts will win this game and the AFC East.

Colts by 6

Tennessee at Baltimore

The Titans escaped with the win against the Browns last week in a close game. The Ravens' defense will keep this game close, but the Titans will prevail.

Titans by 7

NY Jets at NY Giants

The Giants looked as if they actually had a shot at winning the NFC East this year, but with a loss last week to Arizona and a really tough schedule coming up their chances look pretty dim. Some advice for the Tuna. Throw to Keyshawn Johnson!

Jets by 3

Washington at Detroit

If it wasn't for the Redskins' defense they would have a chance to win the division. The Lions are playing good without Charlie Batch and will only get tougher once he's back in the lineup.

Lions by 10

Green Bay at Chicago

The Packers are one of the elite teams of the '90s, but haven't played that well this year. The loss of their head coach and the loss of key players have contributed to their downfall.

Bears by 3

New Orleans at Atlanta

Ricky Williams will have another great outing against another bad team. Both teams are just looking forward to the draft. Unfortunately, the Saints pick will go to the Redskins, but, hey, they got Ricky. Way to go Mike!

Saints by 6

San Francisco at Cincinnati

The Bengals will finally face a Niner team they can beat. The Niners have owned the Bengals in the past, but this might be Cincy's year. The Niners look so bad Boomer might even want to play again.

Bengals by 6

St. Louis at Carolina

At 8-2, the Rams rule the NFC. Not even Dick Vermeil would have thought his team would be in this position, this late in the season.

Rams by 17

Philadelphia at Arizona

The Snake is back. Jake took some snaps in last weeks victory over the Giants. If he starts, the Cardinals will have a shot at the win. Donovan McNabb shows a lot of promise and will be a great NFL Quarterback in the future.

Cardinals by 9

Kansas City at Denver

The Broncos are tough, but they are still hurting. The Chiefs won a real battle last week against the Raiders and will go into Mile High and hand the Broncos another loss.

Chiefs by 6

Cleveland at San Diego

The Browns have only two wins, but have lost some close games. They are improving and will face a disappointing Charger team. The Browns will get their third win in San Diego.

Browns by 3

Seattle at Oakland

Looks like the Seahawks finally faced a defense they couldn't score on. The Raiders will be tough to beat at home, but the Seahawks will win the game and the AFC West.

Seahawks by 9

Dallas at New England

Dallas wins the tough ones and loses the easy ones. They should win this week against a Patriot team that has shown Henkel-esque signs of giving up. The Patriots have to step up on both sides of the ball if they want to win.

Cowboys by 7

Minnesota at Tampa Bay

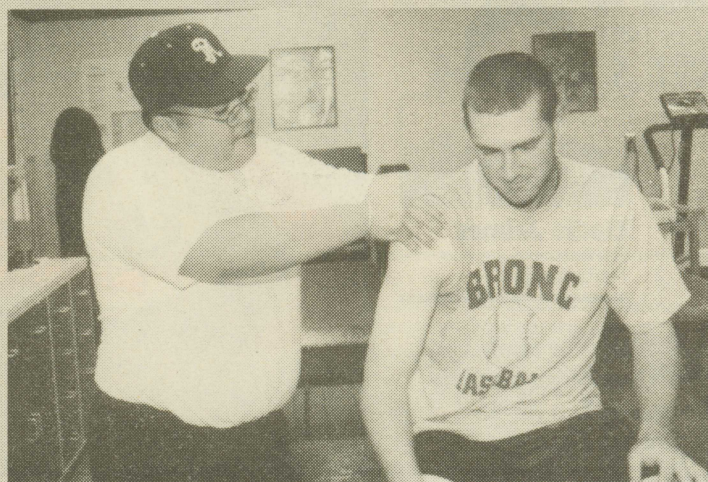
Tampa Bay is winning lately because of their defense. The Vikings are counting on their offense for the wins. How does the old saying go? "Good defense always beats good offense." This will be a great Monday night game.

Bucs by 3

■ ■ ■

You can send your football comments to Eladio via e-mail at mamboking3@hotmail.com.

Staff Profile



-file photo

Lee Rodriguez

-Eladio Jaimez

Lee Rodriguez enters his fourth and final year as a trainer at LUTPA. He has been helping student athletes for seven years dating back to his days at Harlingen High School.

"I hope I have made an impact in the training room in the time that I've been here," said Rodriguez. "One of my goals was to pave the way for other student trainers in the future."

Since the life of a trainer is very hectic, Rodriguez never finds time to participate in any other school activities.

However, he does find time to volunteer at his church in Harlingen every so often. Rodriguez also returns to his high school alma mater and volunteers to help out the student trainers.

In his free time, Rodriguez can be found in the weight room or hitting the club scene.

HOMETOWN: HARLINGEN

CLASSIFICATION: Senior

MAJOR: KINESIOLOGY

PERSONAL: SINGLE

POSITION: HEAD TRAINER

BEST THING ABOUT UTPA: Working with the athletes

MAIN GRIPE: Parking

GOALS: Professional trainer for an Major Leauge Baseball organization

GREATEST INSPIRATION: MY FATHER

WHO DO YOU MOST ADMIRE: Jim Lancaster

WHERE WILL YOU BE 10 YEARS FROM NOW: Making an impact on the lives of young athletes

SPORTS HERO/HEROINE: Omar Ortiz

Bobcats prowl into state semifinal contest

Reaching the final four in the state playoffs has always been a level Valley high school football teams rarely accomplish. The PSJA Bears did it in 1963. The Mission Eagles made it in 1991, while the Port Isabel Tarpons broke through in 1994.



Eladio Jaimez
Staff Writer
The Pan American

Now it is the Edinburg Bobcats' turn to try their luck at a state championship.

The Bobcats reached the semi-finals of the Division I 5A state playoffs by defeating San Antonio Taft 35-32 Friday night in Corpus Christi's Buccaneer Stadium.

The Bobcats (10-3) and the Aldine Eisenhower Eagles (12-1) will battle for a spot in the state championship game at 5:00 p.m. Saturday in San Antonio's Harlandale Memorial Stadium.

After their victory over Taft, the Bobcats traveled to Houston to scout the Eisenhower and Haskings matchup.

Despite the size and quickness of the Eagles, Edinburg Head Coach Robert Vela feels confident about his chances



—Nelson J. Gonzalez/The Pan American

Head Coach Robert Vela and his Edinburg Bobcats will travel to San Antonio to battle Aldine Eisenhower in a semi-final matchup on Saturday.

Saturday in San Antonio.

"I've told our kids we've been Bobcat soldiers for two years now and we'll have to come out of the foxhole and maybe do hand-to-hand battle with Aldine Eisenhower. Like I told our kids. I asked for five weeks of postseason play, and we're past the halfway mark. We're in our fourth game and

one away from playing for a state championship," said Vela.

The Bobcats have taken a huge step in establishing Valley high school football as a legitimate competitor for teams from San Antonio and beyond.

"This is big for the Rio Grande Valley. We've showed them the Valley does have talent. We just went out

there and showed them what we were capable of doing," said senior quarterback Clearance Cruz.

Coach Vela refers to his team as a team of destiny. Their 7-3 record at the end of the regular season was not indicative of the team that has reached the semi-finals. With only seven returning starters, coach Vela's young squad has matured over the season.

"We lost some close games in the last minutes maybe we shouldn't have lost. All that served as experience to these kids. Now they have showed character in some of the ballgames they have comeback and won," said Vela.

Each of the Bobcats' three losses were by a touchdown.

Valley schools have traditionally had big followings in the playoffs. Coach Vela and his Bobcats will be counting on the support of Edinburg and the community as a whole come Saturday.

"They (Eisenhower) don't carry a big fan support. The more we can outnumber them the greater feeling of playing at home we're going to have, and that can demoralize teams that don't have a big following. Crowds can be intimidating at times and we will have a big crowd in San Antonio," said Vela.

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